

**South Atlantic**  
***Frequently Asked Questions***  
**Regulations for Black Sea Bass in the South Atlantic**  
**Regulatory Amendment 19**  
**August 2013**

**What are the actions in the final rule for Regulatory Amendment 19 for black sea bass?**

- An increase in the optimum yield, commercial annual catch limit, recreational annual catch limit, and recreational annual catch target for black sea bass.
- The annual catch limits and recreational annual catch target will change as indicated in the table below.

Fishing Year <sup>1</sup>	Commercial ACL <sup>2</sup>	Recreational ACL <sup>2</sup>	Recreational ACT <sup>2</sup>
2013-2014	780,020	1,033,980	903,905
2014-2015	780,020	1,033,980	903,905
2015-2016	780,020	1,033,980	903,905
2016-2017 <sup>2</sup>	755,274	1,001,177	875,228
<sup>1</sup> The fishing years are from June 1 through May 31.			
<sup>2</sup> Values are in pounds whole weight.			
<sup>3</sup> The ACLs for 2016-2017 would remain in place until modified.			

- A prohibition on the use of black sea bass pots annually from November 1 through April 30, which corresponds to large whale migrations and the right whale calving season in the South Atlantic.

**Why are the increases in catch limits for black sea bass being implemented?**

- The health of the black sea bass population in the South Atlantic was assessed in 2013. The black sea bass stock is not undergoing overfishing (fish being removed too quickly), is not overfished (too few fish in the population), and is rebuilt. The assessment results suggest the black sea bass catch levels may be increased without jeopardizing the health of the population.

**Why is the prohibition of the use of black sea bass pots annually from November 1 through April 30 being implemented?**

- The large whale migration period and the right whale calving season in the South Atlantic extends approximately from November 1 through April 30 each year. Since 2010, harvest levels have reached the commercial annual catch limit with the harvest of black sea bass prohibited before November 1; therefore, actions to prevent black sea bass pot gear from being in the water during this time period have not previously been proposed. However, fishing season length projections have determined that the increase in the

commercial annual catch limit, as specified in Regulatory Amendment 19, could extend the commercial black sea bass season beyond November 1. The prohibition represents precautionary measures to prevent interactions between black sea bass pot gear and whales listed under the Endangered Species Act during large whale migrations and the right whale calving season off the southeastern coast.

**When are the actions in the final rule for Regulatory Amendment 19 effective?**

- The increase in annual catch limits are effective September 23, 2013.
- The prohibition on the use of black sea bass pots annually from November 1 through April 30 is effective October 23, 2013.

**Where can I find more information on Regulatory Amendment 19?**

- Contact NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office  
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- Regulatory Amendment 19 may be found online at the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office Web site at:  
[http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\\_fisheries/s\\_atl/sg/2013/reg\\_am19/index.html](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/2013/reg_am19/index.html).
- Additional information on management of black sea bass in the South Atlantic may be found at: [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\\_fisheries/s\\_atl/sg/bsb/index.html](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/bsb/index.html).